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433 have a high standard of durability. The supply of hides and skins was large, as the Hindu orthodoxy of the ruling house prohibited cow-slaughter and so inflated the numbers of cattle. The production of high-grade rag paper was once important, but has declined before the growth of the Indian mill
505 industry. Finally we may note the importance of water-borne traffic: much of the provisioning of the city is done by flat-bottomed boats, 50–60 ft long and drawing 2 ft or so, which can carry up to 30 tons of cargo. The boatmen, particularly those who man the tourist house-boats, have a reputation for supplementing licit earnings by following the world's second oldest trade.

487 Much of the importance of the Vale, and hence of Srinagar, lies in its function as a staging-base on the Himalayan routes. The Sn entries have already been mentioned; to the NW the road to Gilgit and the Oxus lies across the Raj Diangan Pass (11,800 ft) into the Kishen Ganga Valley and then by the Burzil (13,755) into Astor; both these passes not without danger in winter. But the most important trade route, leading either up the Indus into Tibet or across the Karakoram into Sinkiang, is that to the NE by the Zoji La. At 11,578 ft this is the lowest col on the main W Himalayan axis, a pass of the Maloja type with the steep ascent on the S: this is due to the Sind cutting back into the headwaters of the Dras, which lies on the drier side of the mountains and has much farther to go before it reaches 5200 ft, the local base-level of the Sind.

161 If anywhere on earth presents the semblance of the Happy Valley of
439 *Rasselas*, it is the Vale of Kashmir; but however pleasant the prospects, the
661 human history of the region has been, on the whole, vile. To begin with, it is probably over-populated; density in Anantnag (Srinagar) Dt is 303 (and of course far higher in relation to cultivated area), and it is significant that sugar and grain come next to cotton goods in the Kashmiri import list. Beyond this it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the whole history of Kashmir for the last few centuries has been one of misgovernment and oppression, often deliberate, of the peasantry for the benefit of narrow Court cliques; nor was this tradition dead in this century. At this point it is probably appropriate to discuss the present Indo-Pakistani conflict.

THE KASHMIR DISPUTE

631 'The trouble in Kashmir' stems finally from the simple fact that a popu-
668 lation 77% Muslim was ruled by a family of the strictest Hindu orthodoxy, descendants of a particularly able and ruthless *condottiere* under the Sikhs, Gulab Singh of Jammu, who 'mediated' between British and Sikhs to his own profit. It is safe to say that at no time in the century's existence of the state have relations between the dominant Dogra Rajputs of Jammu and the Muslim majority been other than those of exploiters and exploited, to such an extent that until quite recently agricultural progress was still

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inhibited by the peasant's simple reflection that, if any profit resulted, the tax-gatherer would seize it. 631 668

With the removal of British rule the throne of Kashmir became more than shaky; it is ironic to reflect that, while Congress had frequently proclaimed that only British bayonets kept the Princes on their thrones, *Indian* bayonets were not backward to support the least reputable of the major ruling houses.[18] Legally the ruler's right of adherence to *India* is unquestionable, and this is the basis of the *Indian* claim. Pakistan, of course, points to *Indian* inconsistency in apparently refusing the same right of option—or even of abstaining from option—to the Nizam of Hyderabad. It is not difficult, however, to put forward a reasonable justification of *India's* action in Hyderabad, and moreover Pakistanis are not really entitled to make this point, since shortly before the Kashmir crisis exploded they were seemingly prepared to accept the adherence of the Muslim ruler of Hindu Junagadh, which is not even contiguous with Pakistan.[19] The Pakistani case was still further weakened by complicity in the invasion of NWFP tribesmen; but the alternative might well have been an incursion into the Punjab, and they could only have been restrained by force of Muslim against Muslim: in the summer of 1947 this would have been beyond human nature. The respective proportion of looting and liberation in this tribal incursion cannot be evaluated, and the situation was worse confounded by the virtual war-within-a-war of the Punchis in support of their own ruler against the Dogras of Jammu. It seems that at first many 'Azad Kashmir' troops were genuine volunteers from the Pakistan army, returning on leave (rather freely granted) to their homes in Punch. Later, however, Pakistani intervention was avowed, and this has given *India* her strongest diplomatic weapon. On the *Indian* side much has been made of the democratic nature of Shaik Abdullah's 'People's Government' and its programme of reforms such as the expropriation of (mainly Hindu) landlords. It is impossible to reach any firm judgement. At present there is an uneasy truce along a cease-fire line which leaves *India* holding Jammu and part of Punch, all the Vale, and most of Ladakh W of the Burzil Pass. The charges of oppression from both sides of this line are too probably true, and again it is impossible to assess fairly the work of the rival governments; either territory is in the full swing of rehabilitation and social reform, or stagnant and starving, according to the source of information so liberally supplied by either party.

Leaving these legal and moral issues aside, as appearing to the candid outsider pretty fairly balanced, it would seem that if economic geography should count for anything, then Pakistan's case is stronger than 433 668

[18] It must be admitted, however, that His Highness has been relegated to an obscurity more decent than his previous fame. It is sad to reflect that this tragedy is in the last resort the result of the decision of one man placed in his position by the historic accident of a century ago.

[19] And the Junagadh question is still not entirely dropped.

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433 668 *India's*. The importance of Kashmir water to W Punjab, for both irrigation and power, has been stressed already; Kashmiri timber was also very important to W Punjab, and conversely had its main outlet there, since exploitation depended largely on rafting down the rivers which all flowed into *W* Punjab. The Sialkot sports goods industry used Kashmir willow and resin. The import of salt for the Kashmir tanneries is also more costly from *India* than from the Salt Range mines, and Pakistan would obviously find it easier to supply the food deficit than would *India*. Oil is essential for transport into the Vale, and Pakistanis claim that the natural supply would be from Attock or SW Asia through Karachi.

491 The natural links of Kashmir are mainly with W Punjab. All roads are difficult to maintain, but the Jhelum route is really the only all-weather one. It is only 185 miles from Srinagar to Rawalpindi, 250 to Amritsar, and the *Indian* route is badly snow-bound (or at least impeded) for three months on the Banihal Pass, while its sub-Himalayan stretch lies athwart the drainage of an area notoriously liable to gullying and landslips. Fruit and timber were the largest exports from Kashmir, and while Pakistan has far more potential resources in temperate fruits than has *India*, the timber situation is the reverse.

631 668 Six years after the original outbreak no solution of this not so cold war was remotely in sight. At this stage Shaik Abdullah showed signs of playing his own hand and was obviously reluctant to enter the *Indian* union on the same terms as the other states; indeed he secured substantial constitutional concessions. His supersession further inflamed Pakistani feeling, fearful of a *fait accompli*; but at the same time the crisis held a clear warning that *India* also could overplay her hand *vis-à-vis* the Kashmiris. Hence the dramatic suddenness with which, in August, 1953, both countries agreed at last on a time limit—twelve months—for the ever-receding plebiscite.

But the organisation of it will raise difficulties. Is it to be a simple yes or no, *India* or Pakistan? If the Kashmiris are to decide, it might be that they should have the option of opting for neither, risky as that might be. *India* and Pakistan are likely to be at one in vetoing this, if in nothing else. Then again neither side, for internal political reasons, could well accept complete cession as a result of a possibly narrow adverse majority. However unsatisfactory, and however difficult it is to decide on the basic units, partition seems the only way out.

Indus Kohistan and Gilgit

Nanga Parbat and the Gorges

133 Nanga Parbat, the mighty NW pillar of the Great Himalaya, is almost separated from the main mass by the valleys of the Kishen Ganga and the